



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

10 September 2014

Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Craig Weeks, Chief
Office of Planning and Coordination
U.S. EPA Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75202

Dear Craig Weeks:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) with Texas Department of Transportation as a co-lead agency is initiating a third-party Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Central Texas High Speed-Rail Corridor (CTHSRC) from Dallas to Houston. The CTHSRC is a private application by Texas Central High-Speed Railway, LLC (TCR). TCR and/or its affiliates will be responsible for the project's development, construction, operation, and maintenance. FRA, along with other federal agencies must issue approvals for the application.

The purpose of the privately proposed project is to provide reliable, safe and an economically viable passenger rail transportation using proven high-speed rail technology between Dallas and Houston. The proposed project would provide a convenient alternative to automobile travel on Interstate 45 (I-45) or air travel between the two major metropolitan areas and introduces passenger rail capacity in the vicinity of the corridor. Additional information regarding the proposed project may be found in the Notice of Intent (NOI) published in the Federal Register on June 25, 2014 and on the project website:
<http://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L15911>.

The primary federal action(s) for the proposed project are regulatory approvals. For this project, FRA's safety approval of TCR's high-speed rail technology constitutes the primary federal action. As such under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FRA is the lead federal agency and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has agreed to serve as the co-lead state agency. Your and other federal agencies will likely have other regulatory approvals for the final proposed action.

This project will be coordinated under Section 139 of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (23 USC). Your agency has been identified as an agency that might have interest in the proposed project due the requirements of various environmental regulations. Furthermore, FRA and TxDOT invite the participation of **AGENCY** as a Cooperating Agency in preparation of the Draft EIS and Final EIS, in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6 of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA.

As a Cooperating Agency your special expertise permits you, as requested by the Lead

Agency, to develop information and prepare environmental analyses for the third-party EIS. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Participate in coordination meetings.
2. Provide meaningful input on refining the purpose and need, determining range of alternatives to be considered, and the methodologies and level of detail required in the analysis of alternatives.
3. Identify issues, concerns and any studies that the third-party EIS should address and assist the agency in determining appropriate mitigation strategies.
4. Provide timely review and comment on the pre-draft or pre-final environmental documents to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document.

Once again, FRA and TxDOT are inviting (AGENCY) to serve as Cooperating Agency. Please respond to FRA in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitations within 30 days receipt of this letter. In making your determination and response to FRA please consider whether or not your agency:

- Has jurisdiction or authority with respect to the proposed project
- Has expertise or information relevant to the proposed project
- Intend to submit comments on the proposed project

An Agency Scoping meeting was held on June 26, 2014 in Austin, Texas. At that meeting, it was determined that an additional workshop would be useful to provide a project update prior to the Public Scoping Meetings (tentatively scheduled for the last two weeks in October 2014). FRA and TxDOT are inviting your participation in an upcoming Agency Workshop to be held October 8, 2014, at the URS Austin Office located at 9400 Amberglen Boulevard, Building E, Austin, Texas 78729 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

If you have any questions or require any further information please contact Michael Johnsen (michael.johnsen@dot.gov; 202-493-1310) or Jamie Maughan (james.maughan@dot.gov; 617-494-2881).

Sincerely,



David Valenstein
Environment & Systems Planning Division Chief



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

SEP 24 2014

David Valenstein
Chief, Environmental & Systems
Planning Division
Federal Railroad Administration
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Valenstein:

This is in response to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) letter dated, September 10th, 2014, inviting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to become a cooperating agency for the development of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction and operation of the proposed Central Texas High Speed-Rail Corridor Project from Dallas to Houston, Texas. The EIS will analyze the impacts of the proposed project to the human and natural environment.

The EPA offers to participate in this proposed project as a cooperating agency. As a cooperating agency, the EPA will

- provide expertise on NEPA compliance and other subject matter such as wetlands, water quality, air quality, and environmental justice, during EIS planning and development;
- provide timely technical reviews and comments on preliminary documents, reports, analyses, and sections of the Draft and Final EIS;
- participate in meetings and provide information as requested by FRA, as resources allow;
- provide sources for information or support in the analysis of such information, when known, during preparation of the Draft and Final EIS in areas in which EPA has expertise; and
- review and comment on the Draft and Final EIS pursuant to our regulatory responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We promote compliance with Federal environmental regulations in partnership with our States and Tribes

Internet Address (URL) • <http://www.epa.gov>

Re: Central Texas High Speed-Rail Corridor Project

The EPA anticipates that a cooperative team approach will streamline the environmental process and result in a high quality EIS. We look forward to continued involvement and cooperation in the EIS development for this project. If you have any further questions, please contact Craig Weeks or Michael Jansky of my staff at 214-665-7505 or 214 665-7451 or by e-mail at weeks.craig@epa.gov or jansky.michael@epa.gov, respectively.

Sincerely,

Stacey B. Dwyer

for

John Blevins
Director

Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

cc: Michael Johnsen (FRA)